

OXYGEN DESTROYER



the magazine of Japanese animation hell
vol. 1, no. 1

january, 1991



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INSIDE**



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A-Kon!**

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OXYGEN DESTROYER

OXYGEN DESTROYER #1 Winter 1990. Published quarterly by Gear Productions, P.O. Box 724182, Atlanta GA 30339-1182. Available for \$1.00 per issue or \$5.00 per year (4 issues). Make checks payable to David R. Merrill. Submissions of art and articles welcome.

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Editor: Dave Merrill

Production: Scott Weikert

Contributors: Matt Murray, C.B. Smith, Leslie Forrester, Adam Edelstein, Jeff Roe, Lance Laidlaw, Bill Mayo.

Hello and welcome to the first issue of OXYGEN DESTROYER.

This magazine will serve two purposes —

1. To report on the activities of Japanese anime fandom in the Southeast U.S.

2. To publish informative, entertaining, and/or irritating articles on anime.

Anime fandom has come a long way from the early days - the modern availability of animation far surpasses the existing documentation. In other words, there's lots of anime but not much knowledge.

We are going to try to be something more than just another anime fanzine.

full of traced artwork and yet another Z GUNDAM episode guide.

The object, very simply, is to publish a magazine that we would want to read.

Inside, you'll notice one of our features, the Scene Reports from each state in the Southeast. It's very simple - the anime fans in each state contact us and let us know what's going on. We publish it, and then the entire country is aware of the events occurring. We'd like to get scene reports from EVERY STATE IN THE UNION!!! We happen to know that there are anime fans everywhere, and we want to know just what's going on, everywhere! So if you have a club, or just a bunch of guys who get together to watch PROJECT A-KO and eat pizza, let us know!

THINK WE SUCK?

Then show us what it's all about! Send us your anime-related art, articles, reviews, and short fiction! We're looking for 1-2 page reviews of any anime TV show, film or ova, as well as longer comprehensive synopses of TV shows and films - not to mention anime art of every shape and style!

Prove to us, and the world at large, that you know exactly what the heck is going on. Put your anime where your mouth is!

OXYGEN DESTROYER
PO BOX 724182
ATLANTA GA 30339-1182

First National Anime Convention A Smash!

Project A-Kon, the first national animation convention, went over magnificently last July in Dallas, Texas. Managed by the Earth Defense Command, the convention's guests included Tex Henson (Disney, Fleisher), Louis Scarborough, Jr. (ROCK AND RULE, TEENAGE MUTANT ETC), Steve Kreuger (Broid, Chaser Platoon, Aegrismomnia), B-D Banzai/ Pam Buck (DIRTY PAIR DOES DISHES, VIVA LA DIRTY PAIR, TENTH FLOOR ICE FIGHT), and Comppone Flicks, inc. (STAR DIPWADS, MAKING OF STAR DIPWADS, CAPTAIN HARLOCK VERSUS THE GALACTIC EMPIRE), as well as Trish Ledoux, the editor of ANIMAG. Two video rooms dosed us all with all with anime, both Japanese and otherwise; the dealer's room contained everything from Marvel/DC comics to subtitled DANGAIO to SPACE CRUISER YAMATO movie projectors, and no pirates!

Panels included "Akira versus Bugs Bunny" and "Coping with Anime-Manga Prejudice", and that's not even mentioning the FIRST ANNUAL A-KON MINI-COMIC JAM, managed by Steve Kreuger.

Premiered at A-KON were two new fan films, VIVA LA DIRTY PAIR by Pinesalad Productions, and THE MAKING OF STAR DIPWADS by Comppone Flicks.

Meri Wakefield of the EDC has informed us that attendance exceeded her expectations by about 300 people, and in the final balance, PROJECT A-KON I broke even, no mean feat for a first-time convention!

Even the atmosphere at this convention was above average. Instead of a huge convention business, A-KON was run by fans, and it showed. There were no con security hassles, no fights, no vandalism, no public drunkenness, none of the irresponsible behavior that one sees at larger, more profit-oriented conventions.

Be on the lookout for the sequel- PROJECT A-KON II, which will be held Memorial Day weekend 1991 in Dallas!

For more information contact:

EDC
PROJECT A-KON
P.O. BOX 515942
DALLAS TX 75251-5942

NEWS

SAINT SEIYA will be returning to the realm of Japanese animation soon, with a new series dealing with the war against Hades. Sources report that this original video-only series will focus more upon the battles of the Gold Saints, and it should be out from Toei Video in the spring.

TIM ELDRED, artist of the Eternity comics LENSMAN, GALACTIC PATROL, BROID, and CHASER PLATOON, will be taking over CAPTAIN HARLOCK from Ben Dunn starting sometime around issue 13 or 14, when LENSMAN goes on hiatus. Keep up the good work, Tim!

The Streamline Pictures version of LENSMAN will be appearing in your town soon, hopefully; it's currently making its way around the country. One source has it that the voices are great, and another says they suck. Judge for yourself.

Also, Streamline's AKIRA will be hitting the stores for Christmas, so be sure and pick up lots!!

Pacific Rim's new magazine MARKALITE will be hitting the stands sometime soon, and when it does, you will be able to read lots of great articles on live action Japanese SF, like Godzilla, Ultraman, Spectreman, and Kamen Rider. Pacific Rim's other anime-mag, ANIMAG, has just published its eleventh issue, with articles on

Macross, Gunbuster, and Megazone 23!

For more information:

Pacific Rim
PO Box 23651
Oakland CA 94623-0651

ANIME-CON 91 is going to be happening in San Jose next Labor Day, and it's going to have lots of great guests like Reiji Matsumoto and Katsuhiro Otomo, as well as a film room and two direct-from-master-tape-or-laser-disc video rooms with the programming being shown on closed-circuit TV to all the rooms in the hotel. It sounds like a lot of fun and we all intend to go. Contact:

ANIME CON'91
3145 Geary Blvd., Suite 524
San Francisco CA 94118

The December issue of ANIMAGE is one of their infrequent international editions, featuring art, photos, and letters from fans throughout the world. U.S. anime fandom was well represented by Bruce Lewis, Ann Cronin, Ted & Deb Delorme, "Gun" Brownlee, and a host of others, including photos from A-Kon of our own Dirty Pair and Captain Harlock, as well as plugs for the fan club NEW JAPAN and the fanzine MAGENTA GIRL'S DAY! International editions only happen once in years, so be sure and pick this one up!!

STAR DIPWADS EXODUS 2199

PROLOGUE

The ship was coming apart around Vice-Admiral Ito. Fires had spread throughout her hold, and she was listing wildly. In the hour-and-a-half attack, nearly a dozen torpedoes had speared her. Bombs had torn her decking, crushed the 18-inch gun turrets. Ito looked from the bridge over the broken foredeck of his command. Most of the crew were wounded or dead.

An explosion caught the corner of Ito's attention. He turned to see another bomb strike the light cruiser *Yahagi*. The bridge detonated in a glittering spray of broken, molten metal. Ito saluted stiffly; the commander of the escort cruiser had been a good soldier.

Perhaps a tear graced Ito's cheek then. If it did, it was in any case shaken off as another explosion rocked the ship. Ito stood slowly, cursing the torpedo which had again wounded his beautiful command.

A nervous, cracking voice broke through the insistent drone of the attacking planes. Ito listened as it repeated its instructions to the ship, his ship, a ship of the line. Ito doubted if many heard the intercom's call. They would be too busy choking on the bitter taste of defeat and fear.

Operation Ten-Go was a loss. There would be no help for Okinawa, no avenging kamikaze force. *I have failed, in as complete a manner as possible. A disgrace.*

These thoughts ran through Ito's mind even as his shattered ship began to capsize. There were groans of agony by overstressed metal as Ito was consigned to a deep and forgotten grave.

Even as the water gushed in around him, the commander of the *Yamato* felt a sudden, irrational need to scream out the word "penguin".

ONE

Steven Pigeon walked into his home, shutting the door behind him. It sprung open. He closed it. It came open, almost as if to spite him. Pulling a riot-control machine gun from his jacket, Steven blew the door off its hinges. His wife walked into the room.

"Hi, dear! I thought I heard the chatter of small arms fire."

They kissed lightly, as old couples are wont (cool word, huh?) to do.

"You're home early," said Mrs. Pigeon.

"Well, you know that Wildstar boy is coming over tonight."

"I'd completely forgotten!"

Steven looked at his wife of thirty years. Her childlike innocence was still there after all this time. God, it annoyed the hell out of him.

Mrs. Pigeon frowned, bringing all her inconsiderable mental faculties to bear. They promptly ran into the woods and later mauled some unsuspecting campers. Mrs. Pigeon spoke.

"I suppose I'll have to fix pigeon legs for dinner."

"Now dear, you know what I told you about amputating your own limbs."

"Oh, Steven, don't be silly. Just be sure not to track any of that mud in; I've just vacuumed."

"Yes, dear." Wait. That wasn't what he meant to say. He'd meant to say, "Stop nagging me, you fat-ass bitch. I never loved you." His speech impediment must be cropping up again. Fortunately, his son Homer had a perfectly normal voice. Thinking of which...

"Honey, where's Homer?"

"I think he said he was going to take a swim out near Saturn, dear."

* * * * *

Mark Venture stared down at the exam before him. He had to pass it in order to get an official First-class Navigator rating. He had already failed 563 times; this time he really wanted to pass.

But his mind was a complete blank. Of course, his mind was usually a complete blank. To tell the truth, he couldn't remember a time when it wasn't a complete blank. But then again, he couldn't remember anything.

He looked down hopelessly at the hardest question on the test, the question that failed him every time. The answer blank glared back balefully.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

* * * * *

Belt Sandor, once called "the most talented scientific mind in all Christendom" had just that morning, decided life sucked, and hit upon a solution. He was even now on his way to set fire to the McNamara School for Helpless Blind Orphans.

* * * * *

Dr. N. Saine, was, is, and always will be insignificant.

* * * * *

Everything is going well, thought Derek Wildstar. The Yamato repairs

are complete. Earth's ravaged surface has been restored, and I've finally been promoted to Commodore. There were a few sour notes, he had to admit. For one, Dipwad Command refused to return his calls about hiring him again. Not quite as important but still irking. Nova was frequently having sex with Conroy, and Wildstar didn't even know it. What was really bad was that Conroy didn't know it either, and Nova thought he was a cat.

And the EDC was gonna decommission the Yomota.

* * * * *

Four miles away, Nova Satori was rutting like a crazed weasel with a man who she suspected was a cat, even though everyone else thought he was the lead pilot of the Black Tiger Squadron, he thought he was a wizened 800-year-old Jedi Master, and he was actually a finely crafted set of porcelain tea service.

In any case, they were having some seriously sweaty snuggle-bunnies.

* * * * *

Homer enjoyed these little swims. They gave him a chance to get out, stretch his legs, ward off the forces of explosive decompression. And the situation between his parents was getting worse; just the other night, his father had used the "p" word.

Just then he noticed some copulating sheep.

Normally, he would have gone

his own way, but then he realized something peculiar -- this particular orgy of sheep was 1.3 miles across, which came out roughly 25,048,616,000 fucking balls of wool. (Homer, despite being one fo the stupidest humans ever to exist, had a way with numbers.) As Homer pondered what to do next, another parenthesis cropped up and interrupted his train of thought, which promptly derailed. (Homer's stupidity was, in fact, the very thing that had gotten him accepted, no questions asked [which was good, since he probably didn't have the answers] into the Star Dipwads.)

"I've got to get to the relay satellite and tell the Star Dipwads! This kind of moral degredation cannot be allowed!"

The station humpback-whaled at Homer as he approached.

* * * * *

A group of Buddhist pederasts screamed indignantly as Sandor dropped weights on them.

"Ingrates! This is for science!"

There was a sudden Klondike Bar jingle at the door. That must be Wildstar, thought Sandor. He left the one-ton weight dangling in the air as he went to greet his friend.

Wildstar looked around dazedly as he came into the lab. Most of this was due to running into the door seconds before, but some of it was the wretching familiarity of the room. Good old Sandor. Nothing had changed. Except...

"New pederasts, I see."

"Yes. Let me show you something

on the video panel."

Walking with the characteristic small limp of people with explosive prosthetic legs, Sandor went to a wall control console. He tapped out a short code and all the walls moved west one foot. Then he turned on the large video console that took up one wall and a couch.

"This," he said, pointing because otherwise Wildstar would have no idea to what he was referring, "is the large ball of sheep that Lieutenant Pigeon reported out near Saturn. Here, let me magnify the image."

"How can you do that?" asked Wildstar in a fashion surprisingly similar to that of Gillian near the end of Star Trek IV.

Sandor frowned. Where the hell were his eyebrows? Oh, Wildstar's question.

"Yes. Truth is, you can't. It's just a science fiction thing. Deal with it. But Star Trek V sucked anyway."

Wildstar nodded. He pointed at the image of the sheep traversing one of the couch's endcushions. "Dude, aliens!" he said, or words to that effect.

Sandor's bumbly stupid robot assistant, IQ-0, trundled up.

"Hi, I'm Trundle Fred!"

"Shut up. Wrong book."

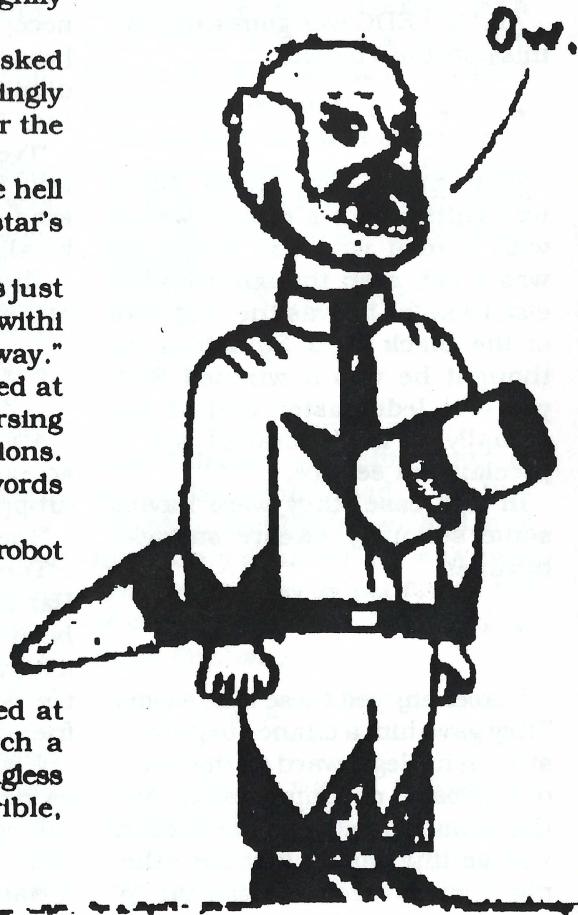
"You wanna go kill'em?"

Wildstar and Sandor looked at each other concernedly. Such a wanton act of random, meaningless violence would be horrible, animalistic, and fun.

"Yeah!"

train to the Yotoga berth. Halfway there, he blacked out, drooling helplessly like a big piece of cheese. Oh, sorry, horrible metaphor. Like a catatonic vegetable.

In any case, the train rammed at full speed into another train carrying the survivors of a horrible fire at the McNamara School for Helpless Blind Orphans. All the characters not previously given a name died slow, mangled deaths. The bridge crew of the Moyato miraculously survived.



Dr. N. Saine drove the shuttle

"Hey..Sarge, look at this," said an olive-drab Marine.

"Big deal, Olivetti. Like nobody in this outfit can turn themselves different colors."

"No, Sarge, I mean this advertisement. *Marines wanted. FREE WOMEN!!! Apply at the space cruiser Yomato.*"

In a trice, Seargent Engine "Monstermonkey" Knox was on his feet and ordering his brigade to deploy.

"Olivetti, grab the rifles. Niel, Johnson, rations. Greggs, I want you to organize Jeep drivers. Kiffer, fetch Bowden's head. And I'll bring the 'supplies'!"

The Marines cheered wildly, with unabandoned glee.

* * * * *

The engines thrummed out a staccato thrum of power and stupidity. The ship shuddered, shivering surely under the short, sharp shock of shattering shaking and shifting shotgun...shekels and... shit. (Alliteration can only be kept up so long.)

So the most devestating threat to benign alien races and competent space piloting ever known, water sluicing from her foredecks in hoary wisps of windblown water and purple prose, shattered waves into rainbow spray as she rose from the foreboding, midnight depths of the untamed ocean.

With a sudden whine, the Toyota crashed resoundingly back into the water.

On the bridge, the scene was chaos.

"What the hell do those tourists

think they're doing? Haven't they ever piloted an advanced space battleship before? Okay, stupid question. But I will shoot them with the shloobybuumevorehaugh-haughss if they fuck up like this again!

"Anyway, what went wrong?" finished Wildstar lamely. The bridge personnel didn't notice, as they were used to anticlimax in his speeches by now.

Sandor glanced at a rapidly flickering column of images on one of his viewscreens. Still no clues as to the possible current location of Elvis. But there was an anomoly...

"As far as I can tell, Wildstar, we're just exceeding takeoff weight."

"How can we exceed our own weight?"

"Yes. The recommended takeoff weight, stupid dicknose."

"Oh, right. Thanks."

Commodore Derek Wildstar made the most impressive solemn face he could manage. As he spun around, the red molecules on his uniform sloughed off because of their own weight.

"Venture, did you bring your lead collection on the ship again?"

Venture bent his head forward, noticing that the green molecules of his uniform were holding up under stress. He sighed in shame and embarrassment.

"Yeth."

Wildstar gave an exasperated why-do-I-have-to-deal-with-the-wackos-who-collect-large-quantities-of-a-certain-element-whose-abbreviation-is-hard-to-remember-because-it's-taken-from-the-Latin-name-and-not-the-simple-English-name look and walked over

to Venture's chair. He placed his hand on the navigator's shoulder, trying to give him the Vulcan nerve pinch. Of course, it did not work. God, how he hated the sham and pretense around Star Trek.

"I know how much it means to you, Venture, but..." he paused, searching for words or real meaning behind them, couldn't find any, and continued anyway, "you have to lose the lead, man."

"Well, if I gotta. Dumping lead."

Two tourists and their advanced Canon 35mm cameras were promptly incinerated as the section of hull they were standing next to exploded inward.

"That's not the dump ballast lever, that's the 'Blow up Frank and Steve' lever!"

"Oh, yeah. Sorry about that, guys."

After some short instruction, Venture dropped his lead to the sea floor.

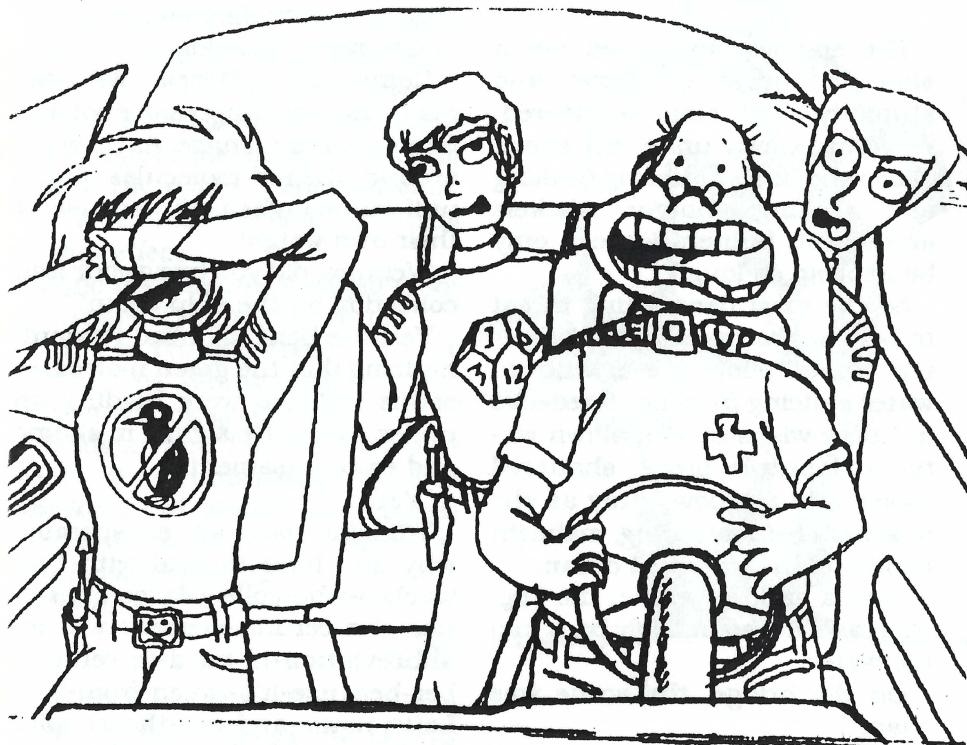
Lazy and basically not wanting to risk actually having to fly or use their skills, the Star Dipwads decided to go directly to hyperspace while still in the water.

"Go real fast!"

Space bent itself along perpendicular lines and folded itself into a reasonable facsimile of a handtowel as the superluminal whine of the Tomato's engines imploded to a whisper.

Some bad things happened to the Earth.

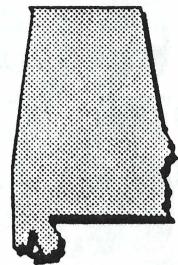
NEXT INSTALLMENT: MORE ZANY HIJINKS WITH YOUR FAVORITE PROFANE ANTI-HEROES!!!



Alabama

Contact:

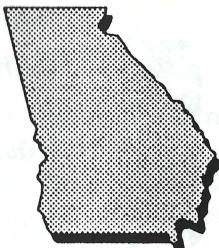
Jeff Roe
New Japan
P.O. Box 59059
Birmingham, AL 35259-9059
(205) 942-6675



Jeff tells me that his club NEW JAPAN is still meeting at his apartment once a month, screening the latest anime for the locals. NEW JAPAN is also zapping out a snazzy newsletter six times a year called ARALE (great name!), edited by the sure hand of Richard Spann. Jeff also attended the recent Atlanta Fantasy Fair, along with his constant companion Nettie Hayden.

ARALE features art, news, and reviews of stuff like translated manga and Japanese jazz albums. One year's worth is \$10.00, and well worth it!

Contact:
Dave Merrill
ANIME-X
P.O. Box 724182
Atlanta, GA 30339-1182
(404) 364-9773



Well, things are ticking in old Hotlanta. AKIRA premiered here in May and we had a strong showing of anime fan at the Friday night showing, right guys? ANIME-X is still meeting one Saturday a month to screen anime, and we planned and executed a roadtrip to PROJECT A-KON this summer in Dallas, as well as running the anime room at the Atlanta Fantasy Fair in August! Be sure to call the ANIME-X Infoline at (404) 364-9773 for the latest info!

Louisiana

Contact:

Adam Edelstein
STAR FORCE II
2601 St. Anthony
New Orleans, LA 70119



Well, Adam tells me that his new club will be making its debut at the NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY CON on June 15-17. The STAR FORCE II is going to submit art and articles to other newsletters around the country, preparatory to starting its own newsletter. Some of their art is already in this issue! Membership in SF2 is \$10.00 yearly, and for that ten bucks you get: access to the SF2 tape/BGM trading list, stationery, subscription to the newsletter, I.D. cards, and more! Make those checks payable to Adam Edelstein, too.

mississippi

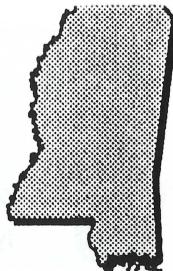
Contact:

David Fowler

P.O. Box 4305

Mississippi College

Clinton, Mississippi 39058

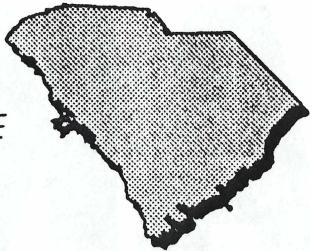


David is the only anime fan in Mississippi I've found yet. If you live in Mississippi or know someone who does, then drop Dave a line!

Carolina

Contact:

Lance Laidlaw
CAROLINA ANIME THEATRE
8344 Witsell St.
Charleston, SC 29418



Lance says that the CAT is still having meetings, but is in desperate need of a transfusion of new animation! He's got lots of stuff to trade, so be sure and give him a writel! Currently the CAT is meeting in the back of a local comic book store, if I'm not mistaken...

Also, in Columbia, Bill Mayo is having a great time with his group, the ANIME MODELERS GUILD. The AMG is a workshop and sounding board for anime model-people from all walks of life, and besides, has a darn neat newsletter to boot. Contact the AMG at 1011 Wando st. Columbia SC 29205

AKIRA

the english version by matt murray

Premiering on May 11th and running for close to a month, Streamline Pictures' English dubbed version of AKIRA was shown at the Phipps Plaza theatres in Atlanta. By and large, I felt that the dubbing was well done, although there were some definite problems as well. I'll concentrate on the good points first.

The biggest point in favor of the film was the fact that it was completely uncut, a rarity in English dubbed versions of Japanese anime. Most of the characters' names were unchanged, the soundtrack was left intact, most of the voice actors were fine, and the script was very close (though not identical) to the original.

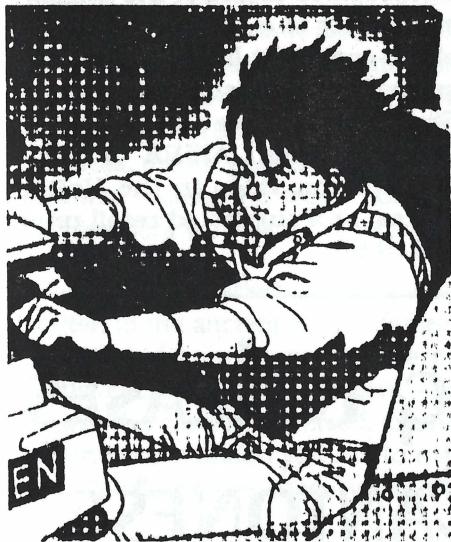
The best voice actor was easily Kaneda's. In light of such previous roles as Max Sterling and Lancer from the ROBOTECH TV series, both rather quiet and peaceful-minded characters, Jimmy Flinders did a surprisingly convincing job of portraying the loud-mouthed, obnoxious punk that is Kaneda. Tetsuo started out sounding a bit too much on the

wimpy side, but improved greatly during the course of the film. Kay, Ryu, and the Doctor were all fairly good, and Mr. Nezu sounded as if he could have been played by the same actor as the Japanese version.. Also, needless to say, this film was always meant to be shown on the big screen, with speakers all around.

Now to the bad points. The biggest of all, and I cannot stress this enough, is that Masaru's voice was really stupid. He doesn't sound like a kid at all; he sounds like an idiot. His voice is hoarse and hissing, and he sounds as if at any moment he will suddenly lapse into jabbering "My Preciousss." It seems all the worse in light of the fact that the other two kids DON'T sound like this, although admittedly Takashi doesn't really sound like a kid either. He sounds like an adult trying to play a kid, and towards the beginning of the film he tends to moan and groan an awful lot. The dialogue director seems to feel the need to have whiny, petulant noises issue forth from Takashi's mouth every time

he opened it, which tended to grate on the nerves.

The Colonel's voice, while reasonably well acted, was drastically different from the original. By my 4th viewing, I had grown accustomed to it, but at first it seemed somewhat awkward. Instead of being deep and authoritative, his voice is gravelley, snarly, and he sounds perpetually pissed off. He also growls quite a bit.



While most names were unchanged, a few were. Ryu was changed to Roy, perhaps of the difficulty an unaccustomed speaker might have in pronouncing the R-Y sound. Nevertheless, I wish it could have been left unchanged, however minor a change it might have been. Yamagata was shortened to Yama, which was no big deal, but while this couldn't really be considered a change, I did find it annoying that Kaneda's name was continually pronounced "Ka-NAY-da". The Japanese "E" is pronounced like a short English "E",

not like a long "A".

Also, some bits of dialogue were needlessy goofy. While looking at Akira's specimen bottles, Tetsuo remarks, "This is more than Chemistry 101, man." My personal favorite bit of goof is when the Colonel, as he prepares to try and stop Tetsuo from reaching the Olympic stadium, tells his soldiers, "Men, we're going to the Olympics." I think that the worst line, though, was one of Masaru's (oddly enough). After Akira has risen, he remarks, "Aaahhhh! It's Akiraal" in a ridiculously awed and surprised fashion, as if he was expecting someone else to come out of the bottles.

In addition to the silliness, some dialogue was changed to the point that it no longer makes sense. In this version, we don't actually hear Yamagata ask "You are Tetsuo, aren't you?", but when Kai recounts the event, he claims that Yamagata DID say that line. In the original, Masaru's first line is "He's (Takashi's) to the west." Now, Baby-Face Masaru the Chopper says "This chapter's finished." I have no idea what the hell this is supposed to mean. Granted, the dialogue had to be rewritten to fit the characters' mouth movements (and it usually works pretty well), but I think in instances such as these, they could have found better lines that would have been closer to the original script.

I feel they could have had a bit more swearing, too. I don't get my jollies by hearing people curse, but we're talking about biker punks here. They often sounded too tame, considering that fact.

Despite these points, I believe that many fans have been too critical of the film in general. While not as good as the original, it is about the best English version I've ever seen. English dubs may still have a ways to go, but they've certainly come a long way since Sandy Frank took his chainsaw to Science Ninja Team Gatchaman and gave us Battle Of The Planets. According to Carl Macek, Streamline is planning to dub HOKUTO NO KEN, ROBOT CARNIVAL, and ICZER ONE, and there's a possibility that they may redub NAUSICAA IN THE VALLEY OF WIND. Fandom should support their efforts, because Streamline is doing more to bring anime

to the States than anyone else ever has. AKIRA is playing at the University of Georgia in Athens sometime in October, and I plan to make the trip, and it shouldn't be too long until Streamline's LENSMAN makes its way to Atlanta.

In closing, I'd like to remind all fans not to purchase English copies of AKIRA from dealers at conventions. The video pirates have copies of the English version for sale, in clear defiance of the copyright laws. Show your support of honest business and Streamline Pictures - and wait until February, when AKIRA will be available on video in the United States, at a suggested retail price of \$19.95.

HONG KONG RELEASES ENGLISH/CANTONESE LD Akira

Sources close to OXYGEN DESTROYER have found mail-order laserdisc dealers selling a disc of AKIRA produced in Hong Kong. The disc has the Streamline English dialogue on one track, and Cantonese dialogue on the other.

While this may seem a boon to anime fans, it seems the picture quality is down a few notches from the Japanese laserdisks, and the

sound effects and music have not been converted to right/left channels like the dialogue.

Printed on the disc package is a warning, stating that the disc is for private home use only, and not for public performance at "conventions, club meetings, or oil drilling platforms."

- Dave

Hi, my name is Catbird. I'm with the Anime Modelers Guild and I'd like to — uh, wait a minute, someone's at the door. I'll be right back. OK, I'm back. Sorry about the interruption. It was the Men In Black. You know, those weirdo government guys that show up after you've been abducted by a UFO. No, no, I wasn't abducted. Are you kidding? Listen, three days ago, I'm in my kitchen minding my own business, fixing some dinner. You know, I'm standing there, frying pan in hand, when one of those little space devils taps me on the shoulder. Geez! I nearly had a heart attack! "What the hell?" I sez. "You guys! It isn't even dark out yet." Well, I ushered their silly little midget asses out the front door. "And no crop art in the yard either!" I heard they ended up three doors down. Some woman — one of those late night party types. They oughta get along great.

Hmmm, where was I? OK, well I had wanted to discuss some abstract modeling ideas but I keep getting stuck on this positive role model theme. Role models? Anime? What's up? Well, here's a good example: Independent Women! What a list — Deunan, Lisa Hayes, Iczer One, Nausicaa, the list goes on. And given the current status of women in Japanese society, this seems nothing short of miraculous. The capable, independent woman is not exactly a stereotype in history either.

Let's see, the oldest surviving work of fiction is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, written in the ancient Semitic language known as Akkadian. All the elements of a terrific story are here: the quest, good and evil, the big battle, etc. One minor problem — a woman waylays our hero, but, of course she can't help herself. Example #2 "Have you eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam, trembling and ashamed, cops out. "Well, you see, there was this fruit — and you know how Eve is!"

It gets worse. Hebrew tradition holds that the *original* creation included a female called Lillith. Now Lillith was created from the earth just like Adam, not the ol' ribcage slight-of-hand. The problem started when she asked for equal billing. Adam balked. So naturally she flew into a rage and ate the children.

What are we to learn from all this? That women aren't very dependable? PMS is the root of all evil? Things are slow to change. One popular animated feature has a young woman (in this case a young mer-woman) 'landing' Mr. Right. And they go off to live the happy life as Mr. & Mrs. Wallet. And yes, Japanese animation has its own problems. Endless battles, silly robots, 'bad' guys with ugly faces, 'good' guys with pretty faces and some very tired plots. But with new material coming out and the success of 'serious' works like *Akira*, the possibilities for interesting, against-type, role model characters continue.

And you thought all modelers really cared about was Mecha!

CONVENTION REPORT 1990!

A fast rundown of the conventions of the past year, as experienced by us. Completely unbiased and fair. Right.

CHATTACON- January.

While other cons try to top each other with bigger and better hotels, guests, and gimmicks, Chatta remains what it's always been- a smooth, well-run weekend of actual science-fiction speculation and socializing. Too bad everything in Chattanooga closes at 9:00 pm. Some Japanese films in the video room, but only if you can face seeing Lum labeled as "Urusei Matsuda".

MAGNUM OPUS CON- March.

If you're an incipient teenage alcoholic with a taste for D&D, large women in spandex, and Star Trek, come to Moc. Watch the fun as the Hitler Youth security closes off the entire hotel, so that no one can go anywhere! Count the pirates in the dealer's room! Challenge your friends to guess how long it'll be before Roland ("I CANNOT ALLOW THIS!") Castle throws a fit! Adding to all this gaiety is the fact that Greenville is another one of those towns that close down at 9:00pm. We ran a anime room for the last time. Save your money.

DIXIE-TREK-May.

It's kind of there. Nothing great, nothing bad, just a media con always looking for bigger and bigger guests, and never getting them. Don't believe the progress reports-- they won't get Leonard Nimoy this year, either. The Dealer's room was more like a closet and the video room plays the same ten films over and over and over. We showed Yamato and Akira in the video room during the graveyard shift they gave us. Stay home.

DRAGONCON/ORIGINS/ ATLANTA COMICS EXPO-July.

Atlanta's would-be convention Fuehrer, Ed Kramer, went for the gold with his version of Origins, the national gaming convention. Kramer had a band, Tom Clancy, marines, and millions of the same teenage alcoholics with clear dice that infest MOC. Watch out for black-clad, Stormtrooper wanna-be security, too. The Atlanta Comics Expo was also happening in a hotel two blocks away, run by the same folks. The Expo actually had some decent dealers, and we ran an anime room that did not get a good turnout. However, I don't

think Kramer will be getting Origins again-- how can so many people be bored for so long and for so much money, without going home?

ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR - August.

AFF continues to put on a good show, in spite of competition from other, geekier, cons. Highlights- Carl Macek giving pirates the works in the dealer's room, the parachute attack from the atrium balconies, and the Atlanta convention premiere of "ARISE - the SubGenius video". Our room was well-attended and went off without a hitch. Good dealer's room this time, too- I actually found stuff to buy, thanks to StarVentures. One dealer had a whole table full of Japanese porno mags...If you go to one Atlanta con, make it this one.

GEORGIA FANTASY CON -

October.

Ed "Droopy" Kramer's answer to the AFF shot blanks, in spite of big-name guests like Harlan "Aggravated Assault" Ellison, Mikey Moorcock (again) and someone from Blue Oyster Cult, (again), who dispensed mystical heavy-metal bullshit to the teenage clear-dice-and-rulebook crowd. Dealer's room sucked like a Hoover, with about 20 dealers, half of whom were pirates. Comments on our 24-hour anime room ran to the "Hey, that's in Japanese!" variety. AFF has nothing to worry about, and neither do you if you stay home.



Gundam Mobile Suit - The Awakening

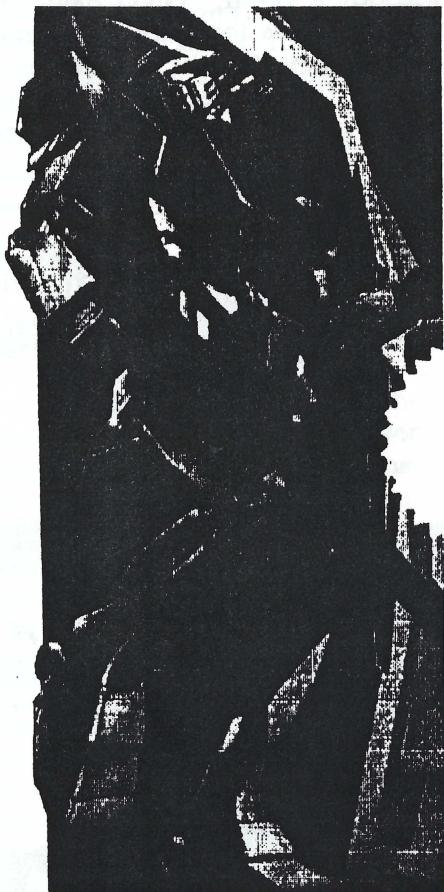
Yoshiyuki Tomino, translated by
Fredrik Schodt, Ballantine Books.

Well, it's finally here. The next best thing to having GUNDAM on TV or in the theatres over here-- the novels. The first volume, AWAKENING, is basically what most anime fans will see as an extremely condensed version of the first MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM TV series. Emphasis on condensed. I am not sure how the hardcore GUNDAM fans will react to GUNDAM MOBILE SUIT-AWAKENING.

As I said, it's condensed. In order to pare the story down, most of the subplots have been eliminated. Most of the secondary characters are given only a few lines. Garma Zabi/Zavi dies almost incidentally, and a lot of other characters are ignored completely. The first novel apparently covers the entire GUNDAM TV series, which is a heck of a lot of GUNDAM to stick in just 210 pages. What happens in the other two books? There isn't any more GUNDAM! Either Tomino wrote novels that don't have anime versions, or they're going right to ZETA GUNDAM.

As Fredrik Schodt notes in the introduction, a lot of anime fans are going to be uncomfortable with some of the translations

he uses for names. The guy a generation of anime fans has known as "Char" is now "Sha". "Zabi" is now "Zavi", and what was once religiously reported as "Zion" or "Jion" is now "Zeon". Not to mention the venerable "White Base" is now known as the "Pegasus". Considering the fury that has raged



before in anime fandom concerning wayward translation, it will be interesting to see how reaction fares...

I'm not sure if it's the fault of Tomino or Schodt, but the novel is written in a lean, almost sparse style, virtually devoid of emotion - almost Hemingwayesque (!). Those who are unfamiliar with the anime will not notice, but Gundam had its share of strong emotional scenes, and it is strange to encounter the same events from a different viewpoint.

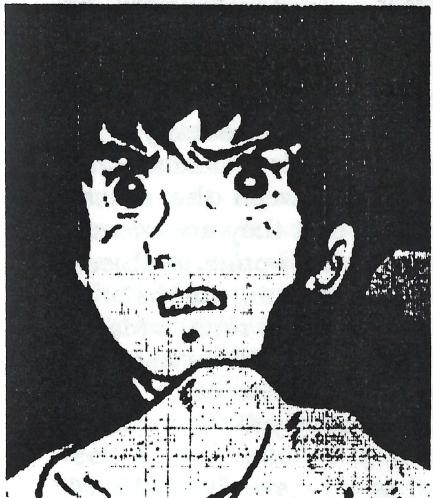
But, in spite of the differences, *GUNDAM MOBILE SUIT---AWAKENING* is a damned fine book. It is, because the story of Gundam - the emergence of the New Types, the vendetta of Char Aznable against the Zabi clan, the struggle of Amuro Ray to find his identity in a violent world against the backdrop of the vast struggle Zion against Earth--- will make enthralling entertainment in any medium.

You can't judge a novel by the same criteria as a animated TV show, no matter how good the show is. Ballantine isn't trying to appeal to just anime fans, but to SF readers as a whole, and they have succeeded with *GUNDAM*.

Anyway, if you are a true *GUNDAM* fan, you'll like it, in spite of the name "changes". There are great passages that go into great detail about the early life of Zeon Dum Daikun and his kids Caspar/Sha Aznable and Artesia/Saila Mas, as well as a great description of the early days of the One Year War, including that humane little strategy of Zeon's known as the "colony crash strategy"-- seen in the first few moments of every episode of the *GUNDAM* TV show.

So, go on out and pick it up! If you're a Gundam person, you will find out some things you didn't know about your favorite show; if you're new to Gundam then this is a chance to start off at the beginning. Either way, *GUNDAM MOBILE SUIT* is a bargain at twice the price.

--David Merrill



OXYMORONS

A column in which we report on stupid happenings in the anime world

THE ANIME SHOWER SPECIAL,
published by Janus Publications, cost: too much.

This delightful little piece of newsprint is brought to you by the same folks who produce *Protoculture Addicts*, and it is just what it says — scanned and xeroxed pictures of various anime and manga characters in the shower, with short text pieces accompanying each.

As a thinking, functioning human being, it is hard for me to comprehend that anyone would purchase such an item, much less produce one. What the hell are they thinking of? It's bad enough having the comic book stores clogged with hardcore pornographic comics, without anime fans getting in on the act! Is this a book that any intelligent person will buy? Not only is the concept juvenile, puerile, pandering, and mindless, but the majority of scenes in the Special are all from very everyday, ordinary anime like *SUPERGAL*, *RANMA 1/2*, *FIRETRIPPER*, and other videos that just about anyone involved in anime fandom already has! The original shower art of such luminaries as the Smith/Warren *DIRTY PAIR* is not much better.

What I object to even more than the shoddy production is the Special's very existence.

In effect, Janus is saying that

anime fandom is solely interested in watching cartoons of girls taking showers; that anime fandom consists entirely of immature, childish geeks interested in watching dirty cartoons and passing it off as an "artform". Is this the kind of image we want to show the rest of fandom—hell, SCREW the rest of fandom—the rest of the WORLD?

What's even worse is the introductory statement, in which the publishers attempt to justify a comic book of other people's cartoon characters naked, by comparing Japanese shower scenes to American film violence, a tangent that is wholly free of any kind of sense or reason.

Justifying rape by saying "Murder happens. Why can't we show some breasts?" is a dangerous and illogical connection. In fact, Janus' own *Protoculture Addicts* had an editorial dealing with the recent mass murders at Ecole Polytechnic in Canada of fourteen girls, which stated that "...society today has a real problem dealing with differences between the sexes." Could it be that they are encouraging the idea of women as objects with their own publications?

Perhaps I am wrong. Maybe anime fandom DOES consist of sweaty adolescent nerds.

Got your copy yet?

— David Merrill

ULTRAMAN - TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The long-awaited new Ultraman series is out, and in fact, it's pretty good.

However, it's being shown in Australia.

Tsubaraya Productions, in association with an Australian film group, has produced a season of "Ultraman- Towards the Future", with Japanese providing the framework and Australians providing the principal writers and actors. It is being aired over Aussie TV, and Japanese release is through the video market.

Compared with the other Ultra series, this one is considerably richer in plot. The series deals with an alien organism known as the Goudas, a bacteria-like spore with malevolent intelligence that spends its time mutating Earth creatures into huge monsters.

The Ultra-guy in this series is known just as "Ultraman" in the Aussie version, and "Ultraman-G" in the Japanese. The human Ultra-host is an astronaut named Jack Shindo, who becomes Ultraman by means of a triangular pendant around his neck. Jack is a member of the UMA, a paramilitary scientific investigation organization with the requisite ground vehicles, planes, and headquarters.

Rather than the "monster-of-the-week" format adopted by the earlier Ultra shows, Towards the

Future has a rudimentary continuity, with plot elements and characters returning within the series.

The main difference between this and earlier Ultraman shows, besides the switch from Japan to Australia, is the focus of the show. Towards the Future spends much more time on character development and interaction than on showing guys in rubber suits beating up monsters, which is admittedly the weak point of the show. The principal UMA members - Arthur Grant as the crusty commander, Lloyd Wilder as the straightforward man of action, Charles Morgan as the eccentric scientist, Kim Shaomin the sensitive, introspective female, Jean Echo as the professional career woman, and Jack Shindo as the spacey, enigmatic Ultra-guy are all individual characters with distinct personalities, giving the show a dimension it never had in Japan.

The effects are, for the most part, better. The model work is excellent, the monsters look real good, the special effects are suitable. The low point of the show is the digital effects they use for superimposing a plane moving, or Ultraman growing; Digital effects on a film background look really bad.

The plots feature even more of

an environmental slant than they did in the '70s, with the reason for Ultraman's warning light being the pollution in the atmosphere, among other eco-plotlines.

An extensive use of location footage and crowd scenes gives the series a needed dimension of reality, balancing the more fanciful aspects of the show.

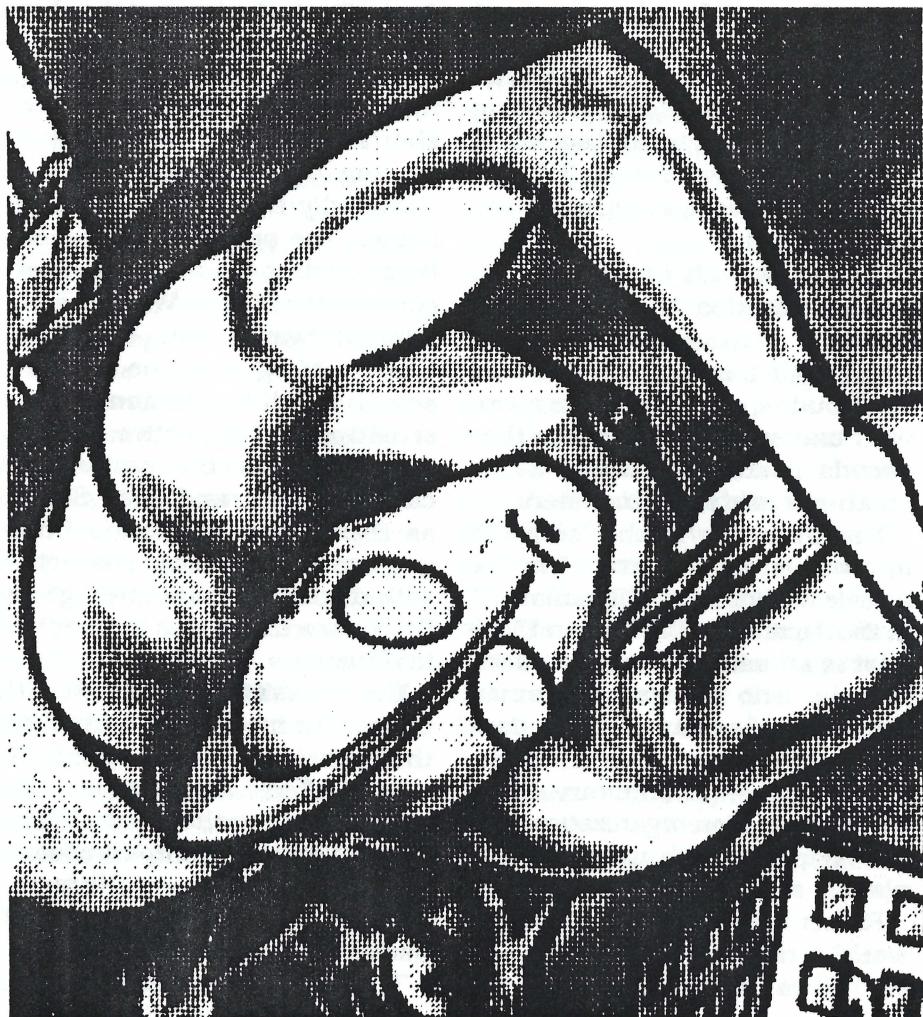
All in all, it seems that the latest installment of the Ultra saga is a worthy successor to the giants of

the past, and it is sure to get more than a glance from the fans of current American TV SF.

Episode titles:

- #1- Signs of Life
- #2- The Hibernation
- #3- Child's dream
- #4- The Storm Hunter
- #5- Blast from the past

--Dave Merrill



Costuming Creativity

Hey all you anime freaks! Yuri (you know, the one with black hair) is here to help you with all your costuming problems! If you're one of the lucky few with no problems, what the heck, read on anyway. This could get very interesting, as I'm not sure just what is going to go into this article.

First of all, what kind of anime costume do you want? All costumes fall into four categories:

1) Plainclothes-- these are costumes that you can buy pieces for at almost any department store. Examples: Ryo Saeba of CITYHUNTER fame. His usual attire consists of a white sport coat, a red t-shirt, and blue slacks. You can pick up an acceptable revolver at most toy stores. Or, perhaps that adorable little witch, Kiki, is more to your liking. A long black dress may be found at any clothing store, but I



would check costume shops as well. A big red bow for your hair, a broom in your hand, a black cat (real or not), and a small transistor radio would finish the costume. Other simple costumes would be Ranma 1/2, or Lupin III.

2)Adaptable: Costumes like this you can buy basic garments for, and alter them. This requires a little artistic ability and maybe some sewing skills. Examples: For a Nausicaa costume, you can buy a blue dress and paint or sew the design on the front. The earrings can be made easily by stringing red teardrop-shaped beads on earring wires, found at most craft stores. Add blue bootcovers and (contrary to popular belief) flesh-tone stretchpants. If you really feel creative, put together a fox-squirrel. I'll be impressed! A Space Cruiser Yamato uniform is another easy one. Buy white pants and a white turtleneck shirt, then stitch or fabric-paint the designs in the color corresponding with your unit, or if you dream of piloting a Cosmotiger, (Cosmo-tigers, GIT 'EM!!) then black clothes with yellow designs, and if you can pick one up, a flight helmet. More examples; Harlock, Cyborg 009, Lum, Nova, A-Ko.

3) From Scratch: For this type of costume, it helps to have a sewing machine and the know-how to use it, or a good pal who can sew, or a bundle of extra cash to pay a total stranger to make your costume, if you and your friends are costume-handicapped. Remember, costumes are called such because

they COST yoU and ME mucho dinero!! Learning to sew is a great deal cheaper and you can be sure of what you get. Let's see if I can come up with some (once again) examples and (surprise) helpful hints! Of course, I must use our DIRTY PAIR outfits here. Those took many tries to perfect, so if you decide to make your own costume, buy more fabric than you think you'll need. We used the bodice (top) part of a fitted dress pattern for our vests and then stitched brassieres into them, then a bikini pattern was used for the bottoms. For a costume that is tight fitting, use spandex (swimsuit fabric) or T-shirt fabric. I'm currently working on the dress worn by Queen Lafresia of the Mazone, worn often in the original ("Cosmic Corsair") Captain Harlock TV series. I bought about seven yards of cheap black fabric and a pattern for a long sleeved, floor length fitted dress. Before I finished it, I inserted large triangles of extra fabric into the skirt to flare it out, and I had to run wire through the bodice so it doesn't fall off while I'm wearing it. Did I ever say scratch costumes were easy?

Captain Harlock's cape was no apple pie, either. The cape part was just a big half-circle of black satin and a big half-circle of red lining put together. The collar was very tricky. Very very tricky. If you have a couple spare hours, call me and I'll explain it to you.

TO BE CONTINUED

Next issue: B-Ko's Battle Suit! Mecha! Warm Fuzzies! and More!

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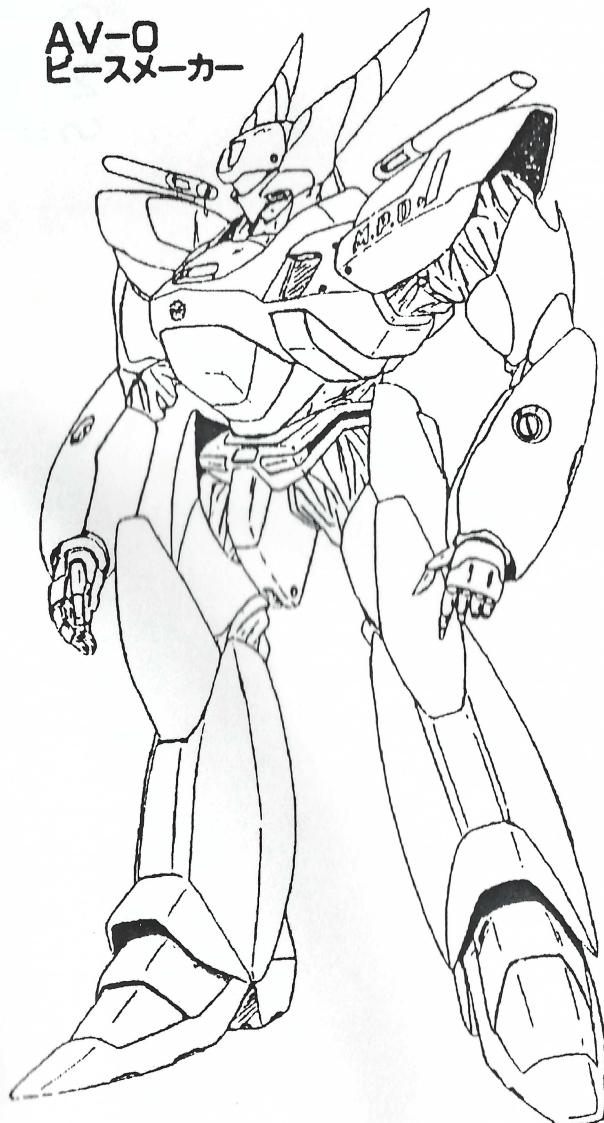
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